

# AGENCY AND VOLITION: A SOCIAL REALIST PERSPECTIVE ON SELECT FINDINGS FROM THE ROER4D PROJECT

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# Agency and volition: A social realist perspective on select findings from the ROER4D project

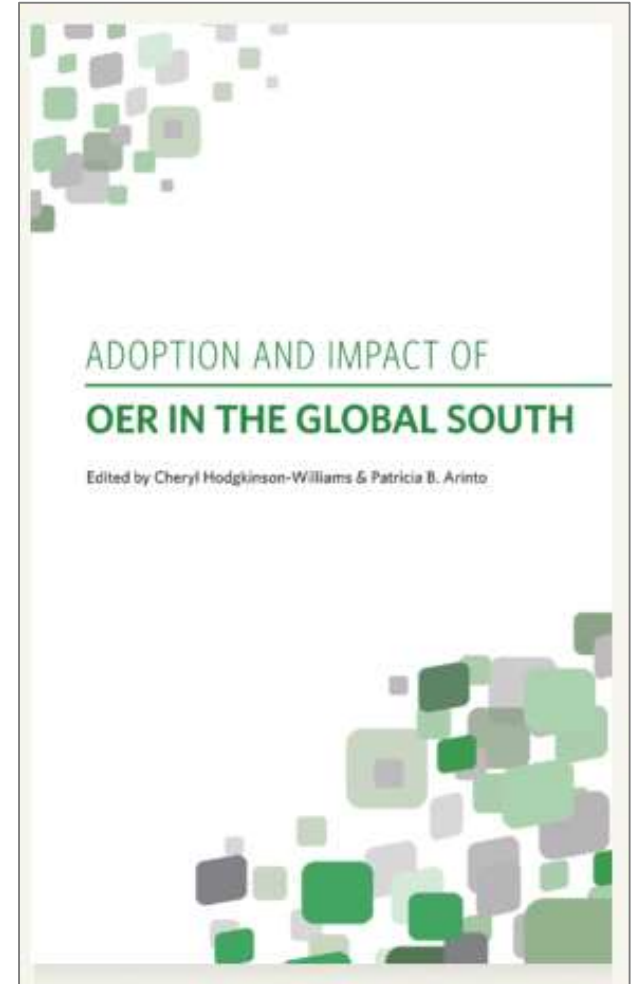
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& Henry Trotter

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# Overview of presentation

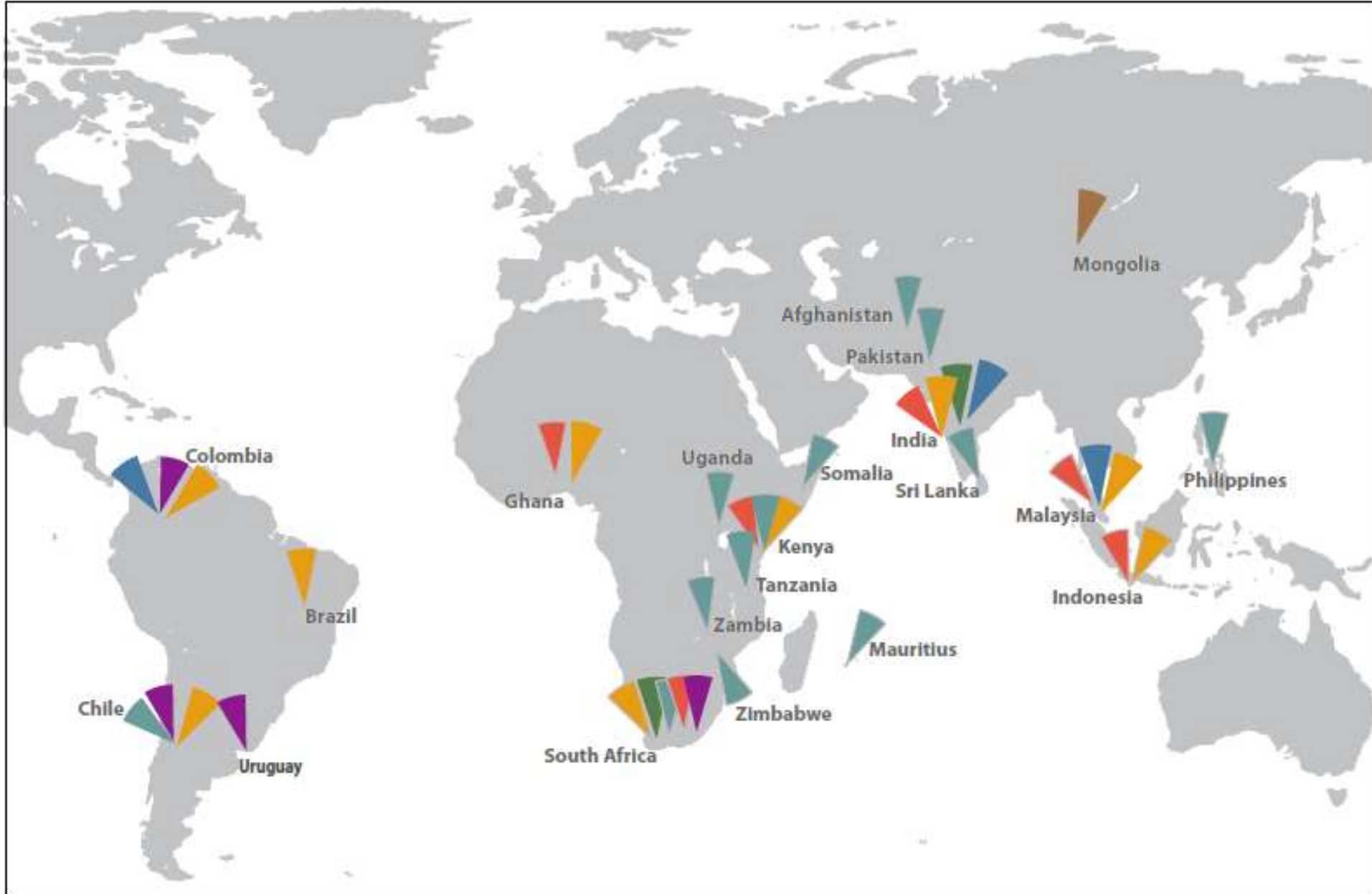
- Introduction to ROER4D
- Meta-synthesis approach (multiple sub-projects)
- Social realism
- Single sub-project comparison with meta-synthesis framework





**Some ROER4D team members, Cape Town, March 2017**





**ROER4D research sites across the Global South :: 18 sub-projects in 26 countries**

# Meta-level research question

*In what ways, and under what circumstances, can the adoption of OER impact upon the increasing demand for accessible, relevant, high-quality and affordable education in the Global South?*

- As a way to synthesise 17 autonomous sub-projects within the ROER4D network

# Meta-synthesis approach

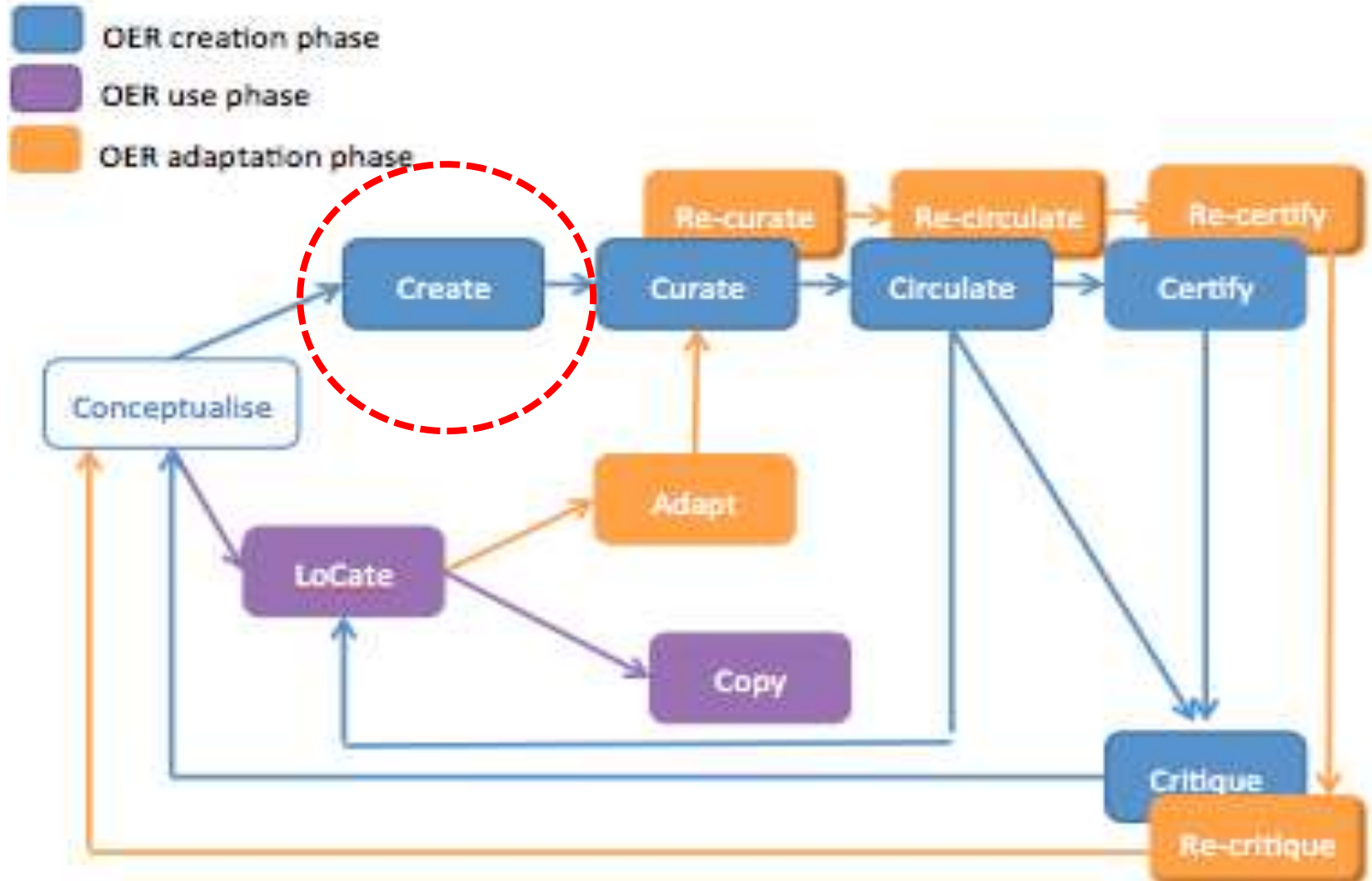
- Synthesis of draft book chapters of the ROER4D edited volume, research reports and in some cases primary micro data
- Conceptual framework of 10Cs “Open Education Cycle” developed by Hodgkinson-Williams (2014) and refined by Walji & Hodgkinson-Williams (2017)
- Theoretical framing using some aspects of Margaret Archer’s (2003) social realism

# Meta-synthesis methodology

- Nvivo used to code themes emergent in the chapters and research reports
- **Themes** helped to provide a more comprehensive understanding and to indicate general **trends** across the sub-projects findings
- **This presentation** will illustrate the meta-synthesis approach highlighting **one step** in the Open Education Cycle and how Archer's social realism can be used to provide a deeper understanding



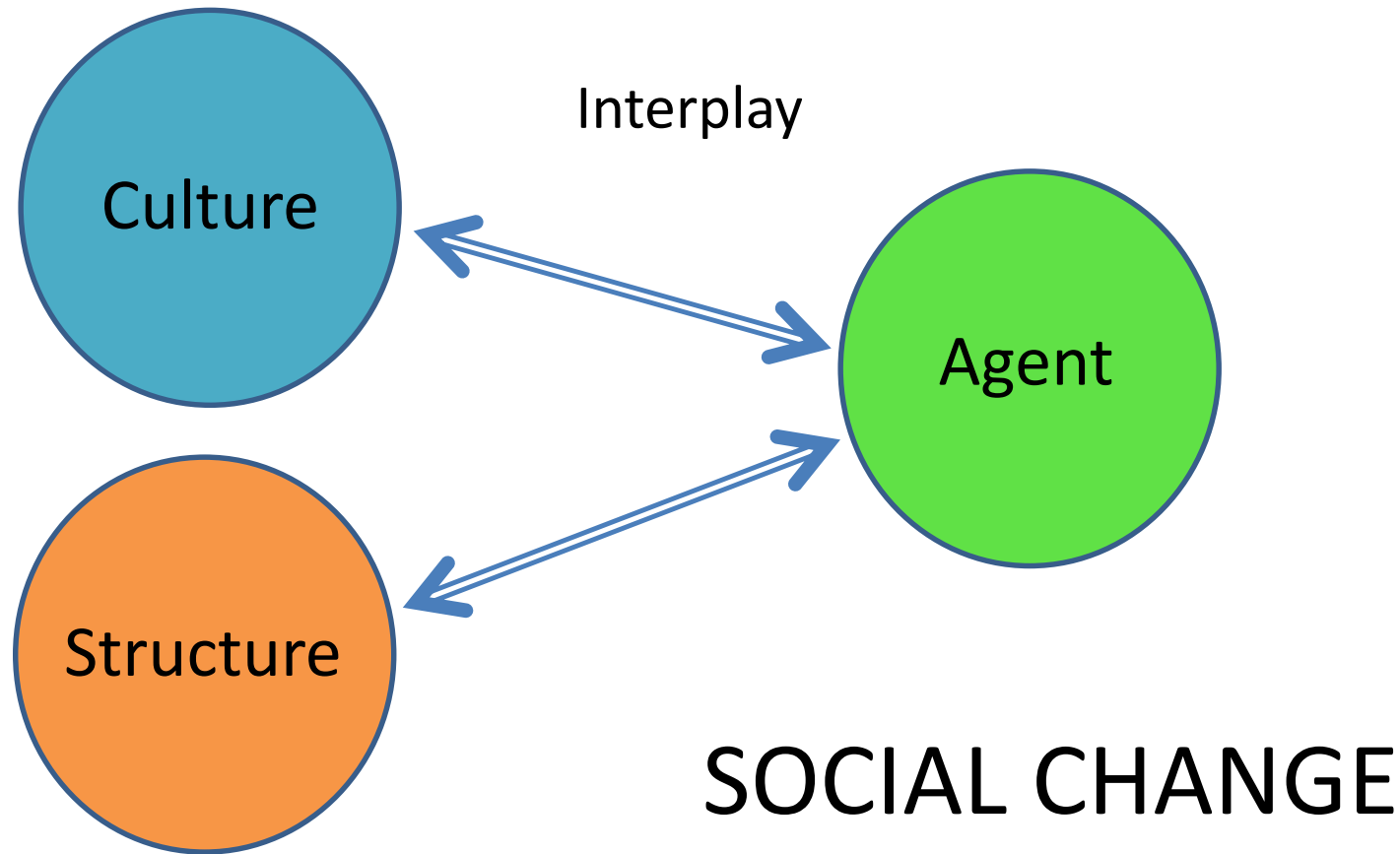
# Optimal Open Education Cycle



# Dimensions of social realism (Margaret Archer)

- Theory of change: morphogenesis (change) and morphostasis (stability)
- Culture, structure and agency
- **Agency** - personal concerns and internal conversations that drive our decision making, but also institutional agency

# Social Change according to Social Realism



“How does structure influence agency?”

“In the ROER4D project, Archer’s theoretical framework is used to understand under what conditions (Structural and cultural) individual’s or institutional decision making result in change or constancy in OEP associated with OER adoption....” (Hodgkinson-Williams, Arinto, Cartmill & King, 2017,p.35)

# **META-SYNTHESIS: CREATION OF OER**

# Meta-synthesis Component: Creation of OER

## Structure

### Enablers:

Government support

School based support

Permission to use open licences

### Constraints:

Lack of permission to share created works

## Culture

### Enablers:

Professional networks

### Constraints:

Unfamiliar practice amongst educators

## Agency

### Enablers:

Digital proficiency  
Consideration for reuse

### Constraints:

Lack of digital proficiency

Lack of awareness of OER and Open licensing

Lack of time

## Interplay

### Access to

infrastructure, medium level digital proficiency, legal permission, technical support, a little financial aid and motivation to share seem to encourage the CREATION of OER



# **CASE STUDY: OER ADOPTION IN SOUTH AFRICAN HIGHER EDUCATION**

# UCT

# UFH

# UNISA

Student access	Residential	Residential	Distance
Student numbers	26 000	11 000	400 000+
Location	Urban	Rural	Dispersed
Approach	Traditional	Traditional	Comprehensive
Institutional culture	Collegial	Bureaucratic	Managerial
Copyright owner of teaching materials	Lecturers	Institution	Institution



# Case studies in South African Higher Ed: Creation of OER

## Structure

### Enablers:

Capacity - technical  
and financial (grants)  
Policy

### Constraints:

Permission  
Power in the hands of  
management -  
includes copyright  
constraints

## Culture

### Enablers:

Awareness  
Sharing culture  
Institutional support  
Academic freedom  
and autonomy

### Constraints:

Bureaucratic/  
managerial where  
institution has power  
and permission and  
no imperative to  
share

## Agency

### Enablers:

Volition

## Interplay

Institutional  
decision makers  
need to support  
OER adoption.

Individual agency is  
key when  
permission is in  
place but then  
depends on  
personal concerns  
of lecturers

# Policy and power

**Policy:** specifically around copyright over materials. Who owns the copyright and has legal permission to share teaching materials

Openly?

**Power:** as a result of the policy either the institution or the individual has the power to choose to share

# References

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- Walji, S. & Hodgkinson-Williams, C. (2017). Understanding the nature of OEP for OER adoption in Global South contexts: Emerging lessons from the ROER4D project. *Presented at OER17, 5–6 April 2017. London, UK*. Retrieved from <https://www.slideshare.net/ROER4D/understanding-the-nature-of-oep-for-oer-adoption-in-global-south-contextsemerging-lessons-from-the-roer4d-project>

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## Further reading

<http://roer4d.org/>

**ROER4D principal investigators:** Cheryl Hodgkinson-Williams & Patricia B. Arinto

**Host institutions:** University of Cape Town & Wawasan Open University

**Edited volume:** <http://www.africanminds.co.za/dd-product/adoption-and-impact-of-oer-in-the-global-south/>

**Published data sets:**

<https://www.datafirst.uct.ac.za/dataportal/index.php/catalog/ROER4D>

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